



**Office of the Attorney General
Paul G. Summers**

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NEWS RELEASE

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Attorney General Warns Internet Auction Sellers To Be Careful of Fraudulent Buyers

Tennessee Attorney General Paul Summers warns of a new twist to Internet Auction fraud that may potentially result in victims losing thousands of dollars.

Scammers often target individuals selling high-end or big ticket items through Internet auctions. Once the auction has ended, the seller will receive a payment, usually in the form of a cashier's check, for a larger amount than the actual auction price. The seller is then instructed to cash or deposit the check and send the difference back to the buyer via another cashier's check or wire transfer. The cashier's check used to pay the seller, however, is counterfeit.

"Unfortunately, this scam often works," Attorney General Summers said, "because many consumers typically believe that cashier's checks are as safe as cash. That is a mistaken assumption as we've seen through a number of complaints to the state."

Many consumers are unaware that even though they deposit the funds into their bank account, they may lose that money when a check is counterfeit. The unfortunate result for the victim is that they may lose the item being auctioned plus an additional amount of money and get nothing in return.

Consumers should always be wary of any complex financial transaction with an unknown person. If you believe you have been solicited to participate in this type of transaction, or if you are a victim of this fraud, contact the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs at (615) 741-4737 or visit their website at <http://www.state.tn.us/consumer/>.

The week of Feb. 1-7 is National Consumer Protection Week.